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LORD'S DAY BILL.

Parliament Had Quite a Lively Discussion Over the Government Measure.

STRONG OPPOSITION DEVELOPED—PREMIER DEFENDS THE BILL.

Ottawa, June 21.—The first morning sitting of the house was held yesterday morning with affair attendance, notwithstanding the meeting of several committees at the same time. Hon. Mr. Lemieux, replying to Dr. Barr, said the bill which had been put on the circulation of the Socialistic paper "Appeal to Reason," had been removed by the late postmaster general, Mr. Aylesworth, after the editor thereof had shown him copies published since March 10, which seemed to be less objectionable than formerly.

The serious work of the day was then taken up, namely the consideration of the bill respecting the Lord's day. Hon. Mr. Aylesworth, in response to Mr. Borden's request, made a brief explanation. He said the question had been thoroughly considered by a special committee, who had heard interested parties and had reported the bill in its present form. The minister of justice said that Christianity was recognized as a constituent part of the law of Canada, as it had been of the law of the British Empire. There had been for years in Canada and in British legislation making certain acts on the Lord's day offences against the law.

Mr. Aylesworth then glanced over some features of the bill, and noted the conflict over transportation interests.

Col. Tisdale asked if the bill would interfere with street railways and tramways now operated on Sunday.

STREET CARS MAY RUN.

Mr. Aylesworth replied that he proposed to amend the bill to provide that it would not interfere with them where they were not now prohibited by provincial legislation. He went on to say that throughout the dominion, except perhaps a portion of Quebec, there had been agitation of a very pronounced kind for legislation in regard to the Lord's day. The subject was necessarily one of very great difficulty. Business interests were in conflict with the convictions of other equally well meaning citizens of Canada. There was unquestionably a general demand for legislation. It was a matter in respect to which the Parliament of Canada was the only tribunal which could effectively pronounce.

It was a matter from every standpoint, therefore, in regard to which in the general interests of the country it was necessary that there should be a spirit of compromise and concession. It was impossible that any one deeply interested in the measure should have to the fullest extent his wishes to carry out. On one hand business interests might be paralyzed if one extreme carried, while if business interests alone were considered it would mean offence to other branches of the community, who advocated their views honestly, conscientiously, and in the fear of God, and would entirely destroy the beneficial effects of the proposed legislation.

A GOVERNMENT MEASURE.

"We found it necessary," Mr. Aylesworth concluded, "to adopt this as a government measure. This measure may not be perfect in all its details, but thus it is presented as a result of faithful, honest and laborious work on the part of the special committee of this house as one for which, in the main, we accept responsibility before this house and as a measure calculated to serve the best interests of this country. We hope there will be another view than that it is the duty of members of this house to assist in making it as perfect as it is possible."

Dr. Daniel, chairman of the special committee, responding to the request of Mr. Roche, Halifax, rather commended the amendments suggested by Mr. Fitzpatrick, but not adopted by the committee, including that providing for grain traffic to be uninterrupted in the fall. He regretted that the committee had not had more time to continue their work.

Mr. Bourassa then led in an attack launched by a section of the house who generally disagreed with the principle of the bill.

LAURIER DEFENDS BILL.

Shortly before 1 o'clock, Sir Wilfrid Laurier rose and, with some

vehemence, defended the bill as in accord with principles recognized by all Christian countries and necessary for the protection of the working classes. At the same time he confessed to a strong belief that owing to varying conditions it will be preferable to allow provincial legislatures to deal with this question. Judicial decisions, however, had rendered it necessary for the federal parliament to legislate.

With reference to the clause respecting domestic servants he pointed out that twenty-four hours exemption from labor did not imply that a servant was exempt from supervision during that period. Sir Wilfrid also said that he could not see the force or logic of Mr. Bourassa's argument. However, he thought the clause regarding parks and amusements should be modified, as he failed to distinguish the difference between a free public park and a park to which admission was charged. Those who enjoyed cricket or other games for their own amusement would still be able to do so.

A KNOTTY CLAUSE.

Mr. Aylesworth proposed to strike out the words "or if without doing of such work on the Lord's day such process could be carried on continuously and safely during other six days of the week" from the clause. This would leave exemption to such works as were essential to any province, industry being sufficiently protected by the first half of the section these words were unnecessary.

Several other suggestions were made, but Alex. Johnston and Ralph Smith objected to Mr. Aylesworth's proposed amendment as it would not give sufficient protection for industries that required to do repairs and pump out or ventilate mines on Sunday.

Dr. Sproule said that the bill was pretty near right. Hon. Mr. Aylesworth proposed an amendment to clause 2, that "provincial" act meant any public act of any province, whether passed before confederation or not.

Armand Laverne (Montmagny), opposed the bill on the lines advocated by Mr. Bourassa.

AN INVASION OF PROVINCIAL RIGHTS.

Mr. Piche (St. Mary's, Montreal), first in French and then in English, argued that legislation was a matter for provincial legislatures. He moved that provincial legislation on the subject, hereafter as well as heretofore enacted, shall be confirmed.

Mr. Aylesworth replied that already the highest court in the realm had pronounced that the Ontario Sunday law was ultra vires of the province. The effect of the amendment would be far-reaching and would destroy all practical benefits from the clause in the bill which they were discussing. They ought not to shirk the responsibility and leave it all to the legislatures.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said that Mr. Piche put his amendment on the grounds that the legislation was an invasion of provincial rights. Civil rights were given to the provinces, but control of the criminal law was left to the dominion, and through this control civil rights had to be invaded.

So far as Quebec is concerned no such law was necessary, because no work was done in that province. But that was not the case in all the provinces. Thousands of people were coming into the west and it was necessary to have the law observed there. The dominion and not the provinces was the proper body to deal with this matter.

Mr. Piche contended that instead of coming to the rescue of the provincial legislatures the bill was in reality curtailing the power of the provinces. The judicial committee of the privy council had never, he contended, declared that the provinces had no right to pass such legislation. The amendment was lost.

WANT "EMERGENCY" CLAUSE.

Mr. Bickerdike asked for an amendment which would allow a vessel carrying cattle to complete loading and sail on Sunday, whereby an accident to machinery or other accident, the vessel had been delayed. He suggested that "emergency" be provided.

H. H. Miller (South Grey) protested against the insertion of the word "emergency" which would throw the door open too wide.

Armand Laverne, asked whether preparation of breakfast by a domestic on Sunday would be regarded as work of necessity or mercy.

D. Henderson (Halton) repeated that the government had adopted the draft prepared by the Lord's Day Alliance. The alliance had made an exception to work to which some members had conscientious objections. He did not desire to oppose Sunday observance, but he objected to being compelled in voting for a bill to declare that the carriage of passengers on a railway train on Sunday was a work of necessity. The bill looked like an attempt to amend the fourth commandment with a proviso permitting certain labor. This, he contended, was ultra vires of the dominion parliament. It was an attempt to legalize Sunday labor.

Mr. Roche (Halifax) endorsed Mr. Bickerdike's suggestion in reference to an exception being made to cover unexpected and unavoidable delays with ships.

Alex. Johnston (Cape Breton) asked that the words "industry or" be

inserted in sub-section A of clause 3 to cover the operation of ventilation process in coal mines as a work of necessity or mercy.

EVENING SESSION.

At last evening's session Mr. Aylesworth gave notice that he would move to insert a sub-section of starting or maintaining fires essential for the protection of property, life, or health as among the works of necessity permitted.

Mr. Monk wanted permissions widened so as to allow the starting of fires on Sunday, as well as the continuance to their destination of those in transit when the Lord's day begins.

Mr. Aylesworth saw that it might be necessary to move freight under certain circumstances, and he proposed to move Mr. Fitzpatrick's amendment providing for the moving of grain after September 15, and for any freight traffic which the railway commission permitted having regard to the objects of the bill.

Mr. Barker moved to allow freight as well as freight trains to be continued to its destination on Sunday.

Mr. Pringle offered an amendment to this effect, which was defeated.

Col. Sam Hughes moved to strike out the provision limiting the handling of trains in yards until after 8 p. m. and before 6 p. m. on Sunday.

The clause limiting work on a Monday paper being begun only after eight o'clock Sunday night was adopted after an amendment by Mr. Ross of British Columbia to permit work to be done at any time Sunday was defeated.

At 1:15 the committee reported progress and the house adjourned. The consideration of the bill will be resumed today.



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